

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 181480 TOSEC 190024

FOLLOWING REPEATS BEIRUT 06514 ACTION SECSTATE INFO SIT-REP
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QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6514

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JULY 22: PALESTINIAN DELEGATION TO
DAMASCUS EVOKES LITTLE HOPE; MILITARY LULL CONTINUES

REF: BEIRUT 6479

1. SUMMARY: SECOND-ECHELON PALESTINIAN DELEGATION LEAVES FOR
DAMASCUS WITH PROPOSED AGENDA FOR ARAFAT-ASSAD SUMMIT, UT
PALESTINIAN CIRCLES PESSIMISTIC. LEBANESE RIGHT PRAISES ASSAD
SPEACH; LEFT CRITICIZES. ARAB LEAGUE FORCE MAINTAINS
POSITIONS AT MUSEUM AREA CONFRONTATION LINE CROSSING POINT.
ICRC WWLL MAKE ANOTHER ATTEMPT JULY 22 TO EVACUATE WOUNDED
FROM TELL ZAATAR. PALESTINIAN-KATAEB CONTACTS ON OTHER LOCAL
ACCOMMODATIONS CONTINUE. AL DEPUTY KHOLI CONTINUES HIS ROUNDS.
KFOUR FRONT THREATENS WITHDRAW RECONGITION FROM PLO. JUNBLATT
SAYS PEACE POSSIBLE IF TELL ZAATAR ACCESS ASSURED. MILITARY
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ACTION AT VERY LOW LEVEL EVERYWHERE, EXCEPT IN METN WHERE

HEAVY CHRISTIAN AND SYRIAN ARTILLERY AGAINST PALESTINIAN POSITIONS. NABAA AREA TENSE AS ARMENIANS APPEAR DETERMINED PREVENT DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST ENCLAVE BASTION. OTHER AREAS AND TRADITIONAL FRONTS FAIRLY QUIET. FOOD SUPPLY TO WEST BEIRUT SOMEWHAT IMPROVED. END SUMMARY.

2. PALESTINIAN DELEGATION FINALLY LEFT FOR DAMASCUS JULY 21 CARRYING DISCUSSION DOCUMENT TO SOUND OUT SYRIAN INTENTIONS AND LAY GROUNDWORK FOR POSSIBLE ARAFAT/ASSAD MEETING. GROUP, ACCOMPANIED BY LIBYAN PREMIER JALLOUD, COMPOSED OF FAROUK KADDOUMI, YASSER ABED RABBO, FADL CHOUR, ABOU-MAZEN, ABOU-MAHER, TALAL NAJI AND SALEH RAAFAT. PROPOSED PALESTINIAN AGENDA FOR ARAFAT/ASSAD DISCUSSIONS INCLUDES: 1) CEASEFIRE CONFORMING TO AL RESOLUTIONS AND UNDER AL FORCES CONTROL; 2) PREPARATION OF A LEBANESE/LEBANESE SOLUTION; 3) REGULATION OF PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN LEBANON IN ACCORDANCE WITH CAIRO ACCORD; 4) REGULATION OF SYRIAN/PALESTINIAN RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY STATUS OF ARMED PALESTINIANS IN SYRIA; AND 5) TELL ZAATAR. SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS OF PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER, ARE REPORTED PESSIMISTIC DUE TO SYRIAN HARD LINE, CONTINUED CHRISTIAN AND SYRIAN MILITARY PRESSURE, APPARENT ARAB STATES' ACQUIESCENCE IN SYRIAN STRATEGY AND ALLEGED SYRIAN EFFORTS UNDERMINE PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST UNITY.

3. REACTION TO JULY 20 ASSAD SPEECH CONTINUES WITH PREDICTABLE RIGHT/LEFT BIAS. FRANJIH THANKS ASSAD FOR HIS "FRANK AND HONORABLE" ATTITUDE AND REITERATES TOTAL SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN MEDIATION. PIERRE GEMAYEL REFERS TO SPEECH AS "AN HISTORIC DOCUMENT" AND "A MODEL OF COURAGE AND HEROISM WHICH PERMITS THE MASSES TO KNOW THE TRUTH." TO HSDZEF THE OUSE KAMIL ASSAD SAID SPEECH "UNVEILED FACTS AND REALITIES AND REESTABLISHED THE TRUTH." LEFTIST PRESS EXCORIATES ASSAD FOR "LIES DESTINED FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION" AND SELF-JUSTIFICATION OF SYRIA'S LEBANON ADVENTURE. AL CONFIDENTIAL

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MOHARRER ACCUSES ASSAD OF "DEFORMATION OF REALITY" WHILE AL NIDA CALLS IN QUESTION "THE ARABISM OF THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT AND HIS DESIRE TO PROMOTE RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINE PROBLEM WHILE HIS TWO PRINCIPAL REGIONAL ALLIES ARE KING HUSSEIN AND SULEIMAN RANJIEH."

4. ARAB LEAGUE CONTINGENT OF 150 SAUDI ARABIANS REMAINS IN POSITION ALONG BEIRUT'S MUSEUM AREA

CONFRONTATION LINE. BUFFER ZONE EXTENDS ALONG AVENUE
FUAD I BETWEEN BALIR HOSPITAL AND NATIONAL MUSEUM/
SURETE GENERAL. LEBANESE ARAB ARMY CLAIM TLVMOBARDMENT
WHICH HINDERED STATIONING OF FORCES ORIGINATED FROM
ASHRAFFIYEH. KATAEB RADIO MAKES CLAIM PROBLEM WAS
CLASH BETWEEN AL FORCES AND PALESTINIANS/LEFTISTS, AND
MURABITOUN THEMSELVES ISSUED STATEMENT OBJECTING TO
BUFFER ZONE WHICH THEY SAY IS ENTIRELY ON LEFTIST
TERRITORY. SECOND MAJOR CLAUSE OF "CORAL BEACH
ACCORD," EVACUATION OF WOUNDED AND CIVILIANS FROM TELL
ZAATAR UNDER ICRC AUSPICES, WILL BE ATTEMPTED AGAIN
JULY 22 WITH 21-VEHICLE CONVOY.

5. CONTACTS CONTINUE BETWEEN KATAEB AND PALESTINIAN
MODERATES. FATAH SECURITY CHIEF ABU HASSAN VISITED
EAST BEIRUT IN COMPANY AL COMMANDER GENERAL GHONEIM
JULY 21 FOR MEETING WITH HIGH-LEVEL KATAEB. GROUP
SAID TO HAVE STUDIED POSSIBILITY REOPENING BEIRUT
AIRPORT AND BEIRUT PORT. ACCORDING SOME REPORTS, ABU
HASSAN AND GHONEIM ALSO MET WITH NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY
LEADERS.

6. ARAB LEAGUE DEPUTY KHOLI MET PRIME MINISTER KARAME
JULY 20 AND LEFTIST AND PALESTINIAN LEADERS JULY 21
IN WEST BEIRUT AND IS SCHEDULED MEET KFOUR LEADERS
JULY 22. AS-SAFIR REPORTS HE BRIEFED KARAME ON
PROPOSED SYRIAN-LEBANESE SECURITY TREATY ACCORDING TO
WHICH SYRIAN FORCES WOULD REMAIN IN LEBANON FOR THREE
YEARS. AL SUPPOSEDLY TRYING TO RESTRICT SYRIAN FORCES
TO THELBEKAA AND NORTH OF LEBANON. KARAME REPORTEDLY TOLD
KARAME THAT JIDDA SUMMIT APPROVED FRANJIEH REMAINING
IN OFFICE UNTIL SEPTEMBER 23.

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7. KFOUR FRONT REPORTED "SERIOUSLY STUDYING POSSIBILITY
OF SUSPENDING RECOGNITION OF PLO BY LEBANON." IF
FRONT DECIDES IT CAN NO LONGER RECOGNIZE PLO, DECISION
WILL ONLY BE RESCINDED ON TWO CONDITIONS: 1) PLO
LEADERS CONSIDERED RESPONSIBLE FOR INTERVENTION IN
INTERNAL LEBANESE AFFAIRS BE REPLACED AND 2) PLO
ANNOUNCE AT FIRST OPPORTUNITY ITS DETERMINATION ACCEPT
CEASEFIRE. ON THE LEFT, JUNBLATT TAKES SOFTER LINE,
SAYING THAT PEACE MIGHT BECOME POSSIBLE IF AL FORCE
CAN ESTABLISH LINK TO TELL ZAATAR. JUNBLATT IS
SUPPOSED TO ANNOUNCE JULY 22 FORMATION OF A UNIFIED
PALESTINIAN/LETOWTM POLITICAL COUNCIL.

8. METN BATTLE CONTINUES AT ARTILLERY DUEL LEVEL.
KATAEB RADIO CLAIMS CALM IN HIGH METN BUT PALESTINIANS/

LEFTISTS SAY IITS POSITIONS AT ZAAROUR, TARCHICHE, AINTOURA, MAJDEL TARCHICHE, HEZZERTA AND KORNAEL BEING HIT BY PERIODIC BOMBARDMENTS. Wafa SAYS SYRIANS AT SOFAR AND MDEIREJ AND RIGHTISTS AT BROUMANA, BEIT-MEIR AND BAABDA DOING THE SHELLING.

9. SHIITE ENCLAVE OF NABAA IN EASTERN SUBURBS BEGINS TO DIVERT SPOTLIGHT FROM TELL ZAATAR WHERE BOMBARDMENTS CONTINUE INTERMITTENTLY AND REMNANT OF PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS HOLDS OUT. NABAA ACTION RESTRICTED TO SHELLING BUT LEFT EXPRESSING GREAT FEARS DUE DORA AREA CONCENTRATION OF RIGHTIST TROOPS. ENTIRE AREA VERY TENSE AND MORE CLASHES REPORTED JULY 21 BETWEEN PALESTINIAN/LEFT AND ARMENIANS. CONTACTS SAID UNDERWAY BETWEEN PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST REPRESENTATIVES IN NABAA AND ARMENIAN TACHNAG PARTY TO SETTLE PROBLEMS. ONE ARMENIAN SOURCE SAYS ARMENIANS HAVE EFFECTIVELY BLOCKADED ACCESS ROUTES TO NABAA AND HAVE TOLD PALESTINIANS/LEFTISTS THEY MUST LEAVE AREA, EVEN ARMED, WITHIN FOUR DAYS AND MAY NOT ENTER IT.

10. GROUND SITUATION UNCHANGED IN NORTH, SOUTH AND BEKAA. IN ALL AREAS SYRIANS CONTINUE PRESSURE BUT ONLY ISOLATED CLASHES REPORTED. ON TRADITIONAL FRONTS, LULL CONTINUES FOR MOST PART WITH HADETH/LEYLAKE AND KAHALE/ALEY MOST ACTIVE. BEIRUT PORT FIRES CONTINUE
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BUT SITUATION GENERALLY QUIET THOUGH TENSE ALONG PORT AREA GREEN LINE.

1. PRESS CLAIMS CONTROLS BY WEST BEIRUT POPULAR COMMITTEES HAVE INSURED ENTRY FLOUR FOR BAKERIES. FLOUR AND SUGAR SAID ARRIVING IN QUANTITY FROM SIDON FOR FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL WEEKS. DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF ELECTRICITY BIZRI SAYS TRANSPORT OF FUEL FROM JYEH BY SEA TO THERMAL ELECTRICAL CENTER AT ZOUK WILL BEGIN IN 48 HOURS.
SEELYE
UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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